

The Twin City Vigilance Committee

By Carleton H. Kohler*

As we have mentioned in recent issues, the amateur-listener interference situation is again acute. This article describes the excellent work of the amateurs in Minneapolis and St. Paul in caring for this situation. We hope that it may serve as an inspiration to other clubs to undertake similar work and as a guide to individual amateurs everywhere. The Chicago Radio Traffic Association is taking care of Chicago needs in a similar arrangement. Where are all the rest of the cities?—Editor.

THE amateur interference situation had, for some time, been growing increasingly serious in Minneapolis and it was deemed necessary that something be done at once. The relations between the Minneapolis amateur and the broadcast listener, and between the amateur and the City of Minneapolis, had been unduly strained for a considerable period of time. Consequently, early this year a Committee on Amateur Interference was formed by the executive council of the Twin City Radio Club to aid in bringing about a readjustment of affairs.

We were faced with the possibility that silent hours from 6 p.m. to 12 a.m. would be made compulsory for all amateur stations in this vicinity unless immediate action was taken to relieve the QRM situation. Therefore the Committee on Amateur Interference gave Twin City amateurs decisive notice that interference on their part would no longer be tolerated. We have discovered that, for the most part, only a few stations were causing interference, and as we felt that such interference could be eliminated, we justly decided that we would ostracize any amateur not co-operating with us. Surely we cannot let the uncompromising attitude of a few amateurs definitely injure the well-being of the majority. In addition, due to the rather chaotic conditions here, amateurs of this vicinity were being blamed for interference not caused by them at all. Briefly, then, we came to the conclusion that prompt, vigorous action would have to be taken if we were ever to rectify this complex and unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Now, however, that the Committee has been formed, we are co-operating directly with the City of Minneapolis through Mr. O. M. Frykman, City Electrical Inspector, and also we have the backing of and are co-operating with the Supervisor of Radio at Chicago.

The effect of these arrangements has been very gratifying, for the Minneapolis amateur now has the good-will of the city officials and the general public, and as a result of the work complaints of amateur interference have decreased practically to zero.

Our Committee not only has arranged to be informed of, to investigate and to adjust all complaints received by the radio office at Chicago and the Minneapolis city authorities, but also we have arranged to supply the Supervisor at Chicago and the City of Minneapolis with complete details of every interference case investigated by us. We have, in addition, requested the Supervisor to call upon us at any time for special investigations and reports. Thus the office at Chicago is able to have in its files a complete report on all complaints originating in this vicinity. To show to what an extent Mr. H. D. Hayes, the Supervisor, appreciates the help rendered to his office and the broadcast listeners of this territory, I quote from one of his letters:

This office appreciates the cooperation thus extended to the broadcast listeners and believes that your action will tend to prove to the general public that the amateurs, both individually and collectively, are not only willing but anxious to assist in making radio conditions as near ideal as possible, especially as far as unnecessary interference is concerned.

In order that the amateurs may be more than ever in a position to show that they are a more or less self-regulatory body and that they will play the game when given a chance, this office will until further notice refer to you personally, as chairman of the amateur interference committee in Minneapolis, all reports of amateur interferences received from that vicinity, with the request that through your organization you will make every effort either to relieve the condition complained of or attempt to satisfy the complainant that his complaint is one that cannot be remedied by the amateurs, either due to the interference experienced by him being caused by the operation of electrical equipment, other than radio transmitters, or possibly by the limitations of his particular type of receiver and receiving installation.

In the operations of the Amateur Interference Committee we make it a practice to investigate personally every complaint received and to adjust the situation definitely in order that the complainant will have no further reason for protest. This has stopped the flow of complaints to the Federal authorities.

In order to inform the general public of the existence of the Committee and to convince them that we are here to serve them, we have had the co-operation of Minneapolis newspapers. One member of our Committee looks after publicity. We have spent considerable time during meetings of the Twin City Radio Club in discussing ways and means of preventing interference to broadcast reception as caused by the operation of amateur transmitters, and so far we have been quite successful in devising means for eliminating such interference. All amateur stations complained of are inspected by us, and we can usually thus clear up the trouble. Personally I believe that amateur interference to broadcast reception is not preventable and can, except perhaps in unusual cases, be eliminated if a sensible attempt is made. Many amateurs, however, do not seem to be sufficiently ambitious to make such an attempt unless a very perceptible stimulus is provided. In my own case I am using a transmitter designed for one-half kw. operation on 40 meters and it has been necessary to devise

a special interference-filter in order to eliminate QRM to neighboring B.C.L's. Now that this special filter is employed it has been proven that no interference is caused even to a B.C. receiver (4-tube T.R.F.) located in the same room with the transmitter. Nor does the use of such a filter reduce the amount of DX worked—instead the tendency is in the other direction.

For a time we experienced considerable trouble from interference arising from sources other than the operation of amateur transmitters. At the present time both the local electric company and the telephone company are aiding us in our interference-elimination work. Mr. D. F. Cottam, our S.C.M., has been doing some very excellent work for the Northern States Power Co., in eliminating interference caused by the equipment of the power company and other electrical apparatus.

Matters have now reached a very satisfactory stage in this city; in fact we are approaching a state of idealism which we did not think could ever materialize. We have received aid and assistance from every side. We are indebted to the Supervisor at Chicago for excellent support and continual encouragement; Mr. Hayes has made some very helpful suggestions and has been most courteous and sincere in his supervision of our work. Likewise Minneapolis city officials deserve much credit for the splendid backing they have given us, especially Messrs. O. M. Fryckman and E. L. Harris, chief electrical inspectors. Above all, Minneapolis amateurs have been extremely unselfish in their co-operation. We have obtained the good-will of the broadcast listeners. As a result of all of this, complaints of amateur interference have practically disappeared.

Our work, while much of the time tedious and difficult, has been upon the whole a great pleasure and we are now reaping the rewards. We have discovered that the policy of co-operating with the broadcast listeners is a policy that "pays big"—for isn't it much better to exert ourselves a bit and perhaps voluntarily curtail a few of our privileges and thus receive the friendship of the B.C.L. and the respect of the Federal radio authorities, than to do "what we darn please" and be "in Dutch" with everybody? This information is submitted in the anticipation that, by its publication, amateurs all over the country may be moved to follow similar methods. It is hoped that amateurs in other cities will awaken to action and that soon the interference problem can be remedied nationally. It is well known that, in general, the situation amateurs all over the country may be suffer unless corrective measures are quickly and effectively adopted. Minneapolis is doing its part and is looking forward to some co-operation from other cities.

Editor's Note: Since the receipt of the above article a letter has been received from Mr. Kohler explaining an expansion of the work of the Twin City QRM committee, from which the following is quoted:

"Now that the broadcast listeners have been pacified and are no longer encountering interference with their reception, we have decided that a few other matters should be taken care of, these matters being 'off-wave' operation, use of raw a.c. on plate, poor operating, operation without license, and other kindred evils. Accordingly we have arranged to supply the Supervisor with regular reports on amateur affairs in this territory. Infractions of law and regulations are being acted upon by the Supervisor, while we are taking care of other phases such as 'poor operating'. The executive council of the Twin City Radio Club felt that there was no reason why all Twin City amateurs should be brought into discredit by the improper actions of a few of our number. The best way to correct the existing troubles was to turn the offenders over to the Supervisor. Consequently the club has advised Twin City amateurs that the off-wave business and similar offenses had best be stopped at once. This was sufficient to correct the situation and at present amateurs of this vicinity are co-operating very well. The official observation stations still maintain supervision and are making frequent check-ups. The measures which the Twin City Radio Club has adopted for bringing about a readjustment of undesirable conditions (interference to broadcast reception included) have been very effective and there is no reason why similar methods cannot be put into operation in other parts of the country."

The Twin Committee tentatively consists, in addition to Mr. Kohler as chairman, of Messrs. J. C. Pehoushek, 9EFK, president of the club; P. R. Gould, 9DHP, publicity manager; W. L. Kinsell, 9CEV; R. W. Billett, 9BIS; R. S. Spooner, 9LW; D. F. Cottam, 9BYA; and the personnel at 9ABK.—Ed.

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